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General and complete disarmament: measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 14 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the following information:

Since the outset of the Syrian crisis, the countries that have been conspiring against Syria, led by the United States of America, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have sought to create pretexts to justify their ongoing aggression against Syria. This effort is part of the unjust campaign that those countries launched on 21 August 2013 when they accused the Syrian Government of using chemical weapons against its own people in the massacre that occurred in eastern Ghutah, and in which dozens of Syrians were killed.

A little less than one year after this criminal act of terrorism occurred, the facts are gradually coming to light. Several documented studies, reports and research papers confirm the direct and indirect involvement of the American administration, along with Turkey and other States, in the commission of this odious crime and other crimes that have occurred in Syria, including the Khan Asal massacre of 19 March 2013. This information is in line with the lengthy article by the American journalist Seymour Hersh, who is known for his investigative work, that was recently published in the *London Review of Books*. In that article, Hersh reveals that the Turkish Government is behind the eastern Ghutah massacre and other crimes, such as the one that was committed in Khan Asal, and that the American administration was aware of this crime and its perpetrators and tampered with evidence that proves that the crime was committed by the Nusrah Front, a branch of Al-Qaida, in order to justify an American attack on Syria. Hersh affirms that he has documents confirming the veracity of the information he published. In an article published in the Friday, 11 April 2014, edition of the British newspaper *The Independent*, the well-known British journalist Robert Fisk confirmed Hersh's conclusion that Turkey was involved in and the American administration was aware

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of the use by the Nusrah Front of toxic substances in eastern Ghutah. An article by the British journalist Patrick Cockburn that appeared in the 13 April 2014 edition of the British newspaper *The Independent on Sunday* and information recently published on the American website Veterans Today confirm Hersh's and Fisk's conclusions, in particular those regarding Turkish and American support for the terrorist Nusrah Front and efforts to cover up its crimes in eastern Ghutah and other parts of Syria, including the use of sarin gas and other toxic substances. Several other articles and studies also confirm that Turkey and America are in fact complicit in those terrorist crimes that were committed in Syria.

Covering up these terrorist crimes and shielding the perpetrators, accusing the Syrian Government and attempting to fabricate pretexts will only encourage armed terrorist groups to use yet again such internationally prohibited weapons and commit further heinous crimes against the Syrian people, as well as the peoples of the region and of the world. The Security Council and the Secretary-General have been provided with substantive information that reveals the intention of armed terrorist groups to use toxic substances in Rif Dimashq, the Hama countryside and other parts of Syria, in order to accuse the Syrian Government of having committed such abhorrent crimes. A few days ago, the Syrian Government sent the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) a new document containing irrefutable evidence that armed terrorist groups are in possession of toxic chlorine gas and that they intend to use it in Aleppo governorate and other parts of Syria.

The Syrian Government has also transmitted to the Secretary-General and the Security Council other documents containing irrefutable evidence that terrorist groups possess toxic gases and that these groups are conducting tests in Turkey and threatening to use those gases against the Syrian people. This evidence includes information on a group of persons led by the Syrian national Haytham al-Qassab, who, along with 11 Turkish nationals, were in possession of 2 kilograms of prohibited sarin gas when the Turkish police arrested them in Adana. On 16 September 2013, in a 130-page indictment, the Adana Public Prosecutor confirmed that the persons arrested belong to the Nusrah Front. By the time the trial started at the end of October 2013, all of those persons had been released, with exception of al-Qassab, who was released immediately after the first hearing owing to pressure applied by the Turkish Government.

In its resolution 2118 (2013), the Security Council reiterates the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004) by requiring Members States to inform the Council of any violation of resolution 1540 (2004). Paragraph 14 of resolution 2118 (2013) reads as follows: "*Decides* that Member States shall inform immediately the Security Council of any violation of resolution 1540 (2004), including acquisition by non-State actors of chemical weapons, their means of delivery and related materials in order to take necessary measures therefore". This means, above all, that terrorists and extremists must not possess such weapons.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic holds the American administration, the Turkish Government and Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and terrorist organizations fully responsible for the crimes that were committed in Syria with chemical weapons, including the recent attack in Kafr Zayta, or any crimes that might be thus committed against the Syrian people.

By putting this information before the Security Council and the international community, Syria is calling on them to shoulder their responsibilities in accordance with the Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism, in particular all provisions of resolution 1373 (2001), as well as resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1540 (2004), and in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3314 (XXIX) of 1974 and 2625 (XXV) of 1970. They must also hold accountable those countries that are implicated in these crimes, which were committed with toxic substances, in particular the United States of America, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, France and Israel. They must further call on them to end their support for terrorist groups and the violations that threaten security and peace in Syria and the region those groups are committing. In that connection, Syria reiterates the importance of ridding the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction and reaffirms its adherence to its legal commitments pursuant to the agreements and protocols that it has ratified, including the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 99 (q), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative
of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations